

Planning Commission To Have East Side Hearing

Anyone for ring around the Soquel - Water - Branciforte triangle?

The city planning commission tonight will hold first hearing on East Santa Cruz Businessmen's association proposals for increased general commercial and higher density residential zoning, primarily south of Soquel avenue.

Contents of the request apparently are amply clear the businessmen's association and the city and its planning staff.

Yet, its clarity has been muddled in a torrent of seemingly petty side issues, to which all bodies concerned have contributed to a certain extent during the past several years.

Perhaps these side issues should be sorted out. But first, there probably has been no attempt to fully explain in print the physical limits of the proposed zoning (directly affecting 773 parcels):

As submitted, limits would be as follows:

GENERAL BUSINESS—Generally deepened to 250 feet along the southern side of Soquel avenue from Ocean street to eastern city limits; along both sides of Seabright avenue from Soquel to Effey street; and south of Water street west of the bluff.

GENERAL APARTMENT—Between Hanover street and the Soquel avenue business strip (with the exception of the Seabright strip) from Bryant's nursery to Oceanview avenue and between Oceanview and Caledonia street south to Broadway.

NEIGHBORHOOD APARTMENT—Between Broadway and the other zoning and on the Morrissey-Harrison triangle point from Frederick to Caledonia street.

TWO-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL—Between Broadway, Darwin, Frederick and Clinton streets and between a hypothetical Park way-Broadway extension, the Soquel business strip and Frederick street (excluding a professional-residential zone between Community hospital and the Soquel strip).

PROFESSIONAL-RESIDENTIAL—As indicated, plus a thin strip roughly from South Morrissey boulevard to Frederick street.

That's what it looks like on a map.

At times it has assumed other proportions.

Do you recall charges that the present master plan effort was designed to undermine the rezoning request (at that time, not submitted)?

That a master plan exists and reflects just what the association is asking? (Mayor Ted Foster frankly admitted a preliminary plan was adopted in December, 1956, as a political expediency. Redevelopment funds rested on "a" document and the businessmen's association would not accept planning commission recommendations. (Theirs were sketched in.)

That the association was not fully represented on the Santa Cruz of Tomorrow committee? (Perhaps justified.)

That the "association" really is an elite group, with President Larry Bertsch answering to realtor Ed Hansmann? (Irrelevant in view of willingness of membership to go along with whatever the active group can get.)

That the city made every effort to thwart the rezoning and its fulfillment? (Adequate fuel apparently was provided.)

That the economic potential study for the East Side was "Phony with a capital 'P'?"

(In essence, what economist Egon P. (Pete) Winter said was, "Look, men, if you take sensible steps in the coming years—consolidation of appliance, apparel and other retail outlets so they can be shopped on foot—expected population and income growth will expand your sales volume two-fold by 1970 and five-fold by 1985." (His recommendations followed classic planning lines, including distinction of auto and grocery outlets—East Side strong points with appliances — from "comparison good.")

These were the sideshows.

In sum, the fact remains that reclassification has been asked and city officials object to certain aspects — perpetuation of strip commercial zoning and any rezoning without adequate documentation (or "timing," in view of master plan development program).

This situation is not unique.

In fact, it follows almost to a word the classic situation forewarned in the U. S. Chamber of Commerce primer on zoning, "Zoning and Civic Development."

It follows this so closely, the opposing local views sound almost as if taken from this script.

"Zoning is essentially a legal tool and an administrative method of putting into current effect certain features of a comprehensive plan. The comprehensive or so-called master plan is a guide which suggests how the various existing and proposed physical features should be related to each other," the document says.

"Objection is sometimes made to this view of the relationship between the zoning map and the comprehensive plan on the ground that the need for zoning is practical and immediate, whereas the comprehensive plan is remote, and perhaps never completely attainable, ideal.

"If the objection is based on the remoteness of a completed and officially recognized comprehensive plan, it may be well taken. On the other hand, if these objections are used to justify zoning which is not based on a sound conception of the future needs and development of the area in question, then they are indefensible," the pamphlet contends.